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ABSTRACT

Ways in which Gallaudet College has used innovative approaches in its outreach services during times of scarce resources are discussed. Gallaudet's outreach programs provide a range of services and advocacy to hearing-impaired populations, nationally and internationally. Outreach efforts are distinguished by their people-to-people focus, which also can lead to a fragmented and inefficient service delivery system. Gallaudet has established an Outreach Coordinating Council in order to build coherence and diminish fragmentation, achieve coordination among the various operating units without replacing their administrative functions, and increase the general efficiency and effectiveness of the outreach mission. The primary purpose of the Outreach Coordinating Council is to coordinate the establishment of policy in matters pertaining to the outreach roles. Outreach efforts of the college include Pre-College Programs, including a Model Secondary School for the Deaf and the College of Continuing Education. Institution-wide outreach services include the Visitor's Center, the International Center, and alumni and community relations. The composition and functions of the Outreach Coordinating Council are outlined. (SW)

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OUTREACH AT GALLAUDET

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OUTREACH AT GALLAUDET

Executive Summary

~~~ Innovative organizations encourage people at all levels to solve problems.

~~~ This organizational characteristic is particularly essential during resource-lean times when the problem solving skills of employees can mean the success or failure of an institution's efforts.

~~~ At Gallaudet, this need for innovative problem solving is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the College's efforts to provide outreach services.

~~~ Gallaudet's outreach programs provide a full range of services and advocacy to hearing impaired populations, nationally and internationally.

~~~ Outreach efforts, like all human service delivery systems, are distinguished by their people-to-people focus.

~~~ This focus, however, can often leave an institution's service delivery system fragmented and inefficient.

~~~ To remedy such weaknesses, there must exist a readiness among the institution's outreach units to collaborate.

~~~ This willingness to collaborate allows Gallaudet to adopt more flexible responses to changing environments.

~~~ The challenge then is not to create new administrative structures but to maximize effectiveness by reducing costs, diminishing fragmentation, and improving the delivery of services.

~~~ Gallaudet is meeting this challenge through the establishment of an Outreach Coordinating Council. This body can effectively enhance the institution's multi-purpose outreach mission by ...

* offering Gallaudet's outreach audiences an identifiable structure to relate to when addressing their needs;
* building coherence and diminishing fragmentation;
* achieving coordination among the various operating units without replacing their administrative functions; and,
* increasing the general efficiency and effectiveness of the entire outreach mission.

OUTREACH AT GALLAUDET

"It is impossible to really innovate unless
you can deal with all aspects of the problem.
If you can only deal with the yolks or whites,
it's pretty hard to make an omelette."

Gene Amdahl, President
Amdahl Corp., & Acsys Ltd.

Innovation requires intellectual effort. It means people are turned on. All people. On all fronts. People at all levels can contribute to solving an organization's problems by contributing to pieces of larger strategies in cooperative and interactive ways.

Innovation thrives in organizations that set up the conditions for encouraging people to bring problem solving ideas into action. Since we no longer inhabit the resource-rich environments of former times, innovation becomes equated with risk-taking. However, when resources are in short supply, the potential for innovation need not and should not diminish. Gallaudet's response during resource-lean times in the domain of innovation is to design new ways of getting people to solve problems and deliver results.

It is the purpose of this position paper on outreach services to share with the members of Gallaudet's varied constituency: a statement on how the institution tends to make use of its most valued resource -- people -- when providing outreach services in a resource-lean environment.

Statement of the Problem

The single most distinguishing feature about an outreach effort is its people-to-people focus. Like all human services, outreach efforts must be organized to achieve a certain economy of scale, if they are to be purposeful, affordable and deliverable. However, when an institution's system of outreach services is fragmented into numerous and overlapping competing structures, it becomes less effective in meeting the needs of the people served.

Outreach efforts in a large multi-purpose institution such as Gallaudet are especially prone to fragmentation. To dismantle existing operating units by coalescing them into an all encompassing administrative structure would be a simplistic response to an exceedingly complex problem. The fact that outreach usually begins as a problem in geography ... reaching out to consumer publics at great distances, and ends up as a problem in geometry ... failing to achieve that desirable economy of scale due to overlapping and competing structures, highlights significant features of the problem's overall complexity.

Before an improved outreach effort of the scope and scale characterizing Gallaudet's can be mounted, there must prevail a willingness and commitment among the institution's operating units to form partnerships. Such willingness will encourage the creation of an exciting and dynamic climate for innovation. It will also allow the institution to adopt a more rapid response posture to changing conditions in its external environment.

Historically, the mission of Gallaudet College has been to serve as a comprehensive, multi-purpose institution of higher education for hearing impaired students both from America and abroad. Recent expansion of emphases in the areas of teaching, research, and outreach programs have brought Gallaudet's scope of services abreast to that of a modern land-grant university.

Additionally, the mission statements of Gallaudet's Pre-College Programs (PCP) contain provisions for impacting upon the field of deaf education through dissemination and diffusion of developmental efforts. The enabling legislation of PCP's Model Secondary School for the Deaf -- P.L. 89-694, October 1966 -- for example, calls for the creation of "an exemplary secondary school program to stimulate the development of similarly excellent programs throughout the nation". Similarly, the revised legislation of PCP's Kendall Demonstration Elementary School -- P.L. 91-587, December 1970 -- contains a comparable charge for not only marketing instructional products, but also disseminating information, methods and techniques relevant to the instruction of elementary and pre-school deaf students. In response to these legislative mandates, PCP has developed appropriate administrative structures to address its outreach mission, as well as creating a nationwide alliance of schools and programs to facilitate the delivery of such services.

The College of Continuing Education (CCE) at Gallaudet also has a primary outreach mission of substantial scope, as outlined in the institution's Policy #1:10 (1980).

Like its PCP counterpart, CCE has put into place similar administrative structures, including a nationwide coalition of regional centers to assist in its outreach mandate. These centers are based in college settings and receive extensive non-monetary support from the host institutions, as do PCP's "schools of the future" centers which are hosted by schools of the deaf in various states.

Gallaudet College then is very much in the business of bringing in people and of sending out people ... of importing and of exporting disseminable products, programs, and publications to and from an ever-widening spiral of audiences ... all the while subscribing to the notion that outreach is a two-way street. The College of Continuing Education, the Pre-College Programs, the National Center for Law and the Deaf, the National Information Center on Deafness, and the Office for Alumni Relations are but a few of the many units within the institution that traffic along the avenues of outreach. Figure 1 presents a conceptual schema of how the various operating units relate to each other.

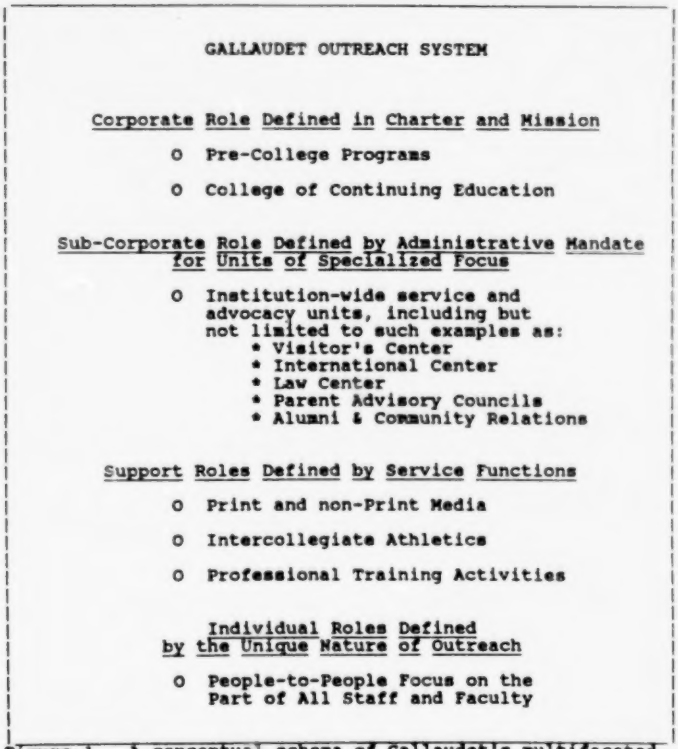
GALLAUDET OUTREACH SYSTEM
Corporate Role Defined in Charter and Mission
o Pre-College Programs
o College of Continuing Education
Sub-Corporate Role Defined by Administrative Mandate for Units of Specialized Focus
o Institution-wide service and advocacy units, including but not limited to such examples as:
* Visitor's Center
* International Center
* Law Center
* Parent Advisory Councils
* Alumni & Community Relations
Support Roles Defined by Service Functions
o Print and non-Print Media
o Intercollegiate Athletics
o Professional Training Activities
Individual Roles Defined by the Unique Nature of Outreach
o People-to-People Focus on the Part of All Staff and Faculty

Figure 1. A conceptual schema of Gallaudet's multifaceted outreach system in the light of its various role definitions.

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As can be gathered, CCE and PCP are perceived as the premiere outreach units from the standpoint of the institution's corporate responsibility. They, more than any other operating unit within the College, have outreach as their central mission. Their future success and viability is therefore attendant to their outreach mission. Figure 1 illustrates this premiere role of CCE and PCP in outreach while also identifying the sub-corporate and other roles played by other units within the institution.

The problem that confronts Gallaudet is not who and how many of its various resources should be reaching out across and among these various levels to wider audiences and neglected constituencies, but how and in what degree of concert should the institution's strategic outreach mission be handled. The challenge then is not just to create new internal structures and more field-based alliances, but to develop a collaborative approach which allows the College to function in an environment where such alliances and structures have already been established and are more or less minimally fulfilling their intended purpose. In this way, the institution is in a better position to acknowledge its limitations as a service provider, while at the same time managing the expectations of its consumer publics.

A Collaborative Brokering Model

Any community that shares and develops resources to meet the needs of its members can be considered a collaborative. Collaborative relationships maximize effectiveness by reducing costs, improve the delivery of services by streamlining resources, and diminish the likelihood of fragmentation by providing cohesive structures of operation. Collaboration is first, foremost, and last a frame of mind, and provides the linchpin of Gallaudet's strategic outreach strategy.

Brokering, on the other hand, is a mechanism that links consumers who have needs with service providers who have the resources to meet those needs. Service delivery through a brokering mechanism may address the needs of either small groups functioning in isolation, or several groups in the aggregate. The brokering agency enters the forum of consumers and providers by altering the traditional formula of supply and demand. That is, the process of grouping needs in proportion to increased demand permits the scope of services to be delivered in a manner noteworthy for its economy of scale. Brokering, therefore, results in a matching of needs with resources in an economic and efficient fashion.

A collaborative brokering approach in the delivery of consumer related services (a) increases available resources through bartering in an environment of fixed financial outlays, (b) reduces costs by facilitating planning among members of the collaborative, (c) provides services on an economically efficient scale by aggregating demand, and (d) increases the two-way flow of information through the pivotal location of the broker within the service delivery system.*

Collaborative brokering agreements are admirably suited for alliances of networks already established and in place. In such pre-existing arrangements the needs of the consumers are generally known, as is the potential capacity of the service provider in addressing such needs. Consequently, with cooperation and commitment firmly in place, there only remains the identification of a broker who will lead the effort of coalescing the activities of planning, resource allocation, assessment of services, and information management between the providing agency and the consumer public. It is in this very capacity of "information brokering" that service providers remain responsive to local needs, that logistics are kept streamlined, and that economies of scale are maximized in the delivery of services.

Alignment of Services at Gallaudet

In their quest to become more innovative in the management of decline, higher education officials have attempted to sharpen the clarity of their institution's enrollment focus by launching more aggressive outreach efforts. Program developers in the area of continuing higher education are constantly looking for new student markets to serve at all points along the age spectrum. Colleges and universities will be witnessing the unmistakable shift of continuing education from the periphery of the educational enterprise to its very heart and center.

Traditionally, continuing education programmers have usually been assigned the responsibilities by their institutions (1) to develop a wide range of effective program offerings and services, (2) to assess the needs of target populations, (3) to arrange for necessary linkages between service providers and consumer populations, and (4) to evaluate the quality of the services from the point of view of a) the program developers, b) on-site providers, and c) service recipients. Although most outreach program developers and service providers understand the responsibilities of their tasks,

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*Cf. J. Himes et al. Demonstration of a collaborative brokering model. ERIC Document ED 233 120.

few institutions provide them with a workable framework within which to couch these responsibilities in any consistently effective manner. At Gallaudet this problem is significantly more complex than at most colleges.

Gallaudet College has long subscribed to a conceptualization of outreach that is at once both encompassing and pluralistic. Rejecting a more narrow and utilitarian focus of outreach, the College's practice is in keeping with what Johnson (1985)* has found in his recent survey of the literature; namely, the chief reasons for consumer participation in an institution's outreach offerings are (a) self-improvement, and (b) professional re-treading and/or certification -- and not, as some would expect, employability. This broad perspective on outreach as a means of improving general quality-of-life outcomes implies a diversity of approaches that taps the talents of nearly all aspects of the institution's resources.

The charge implicit in Gallaudet's multi-purpose outreach mission is simply too large and too complex to be addressed by any single administrative unit within the College. On the other hand, for ease of communication with certain of our publics, some identifiable and workable structure is necessary for building coherence and diminishing fragmentation. Gallaudet is thus proposing the establishment of an Outreach Coordinating Council whose primary function will be to recommend broadly based outreach policies. The Council will not replace the administrative function of current operating units within the outreach system. Its policies will, however, apply to all such units for the purposes of achieving cooperation, coordination, and general improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. The purpose, functions, and composition of the Outreach Coordinating Council appear in Figure 2.

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* J. M. Johnson (1985). Adults in Crisis: Illiteracy in in America. San Francisco: Far West Lab for Educational Research and Development.

OUTREACH COORDINATING COUNCIL

Primary Purpose

- To coordinate the establishment of policy for the institution on matters pertaining to the corporate and sub-corporate roles of outreach.

Principal Functions

- Policy recommendations
- Procedural guideline implementation
- Appropriateness of annual operating plan
- Identification of marketing strategies
- Responsiveness to constituent needs
- Efficiency in the use of resources
- Effectiveness of delivery system
- Adequacy of information flow among and between all components of the Gallaudet Outreach System

Composition

- Minimally, the membership will include:
  - Dean, Arts & Sciences
  - Dean, School of Education/Human Services
  - Dean, School of Communication
  - Dean, Pre-College Programs
  - Dean, Continuing Education
  - Vice President for College Relations
  - Director, Alumni Relations and Advancement
  - Special Assistant to the President
  - Chair, as appointed by the President

Procedures

- Chair develops with President an annual plan
- Chair reports to President on all actions and recommendations of the Council
- Meetings will occur at a minimum of three (3) times per year with Minutes sent to President
- Council submits annual report to President

Figure 2. The purpose, functions, and composition of the Outreach Coordinating Council.

Policy recommendations by the Council shall be limited to those issues which cannot be resolved within or between individual operating units. Areas requiring policy and procedure development which the Council may wish to address include, but are not limited to, the following examples.

- **What requirements for sharing information would be necessary to preclude redundancy in services?**
- **What general fee structure is appropriate?**

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* Which operating units would best represent the institution in the field for any given request for services?

* What service delivery reporting procedures should be implemented?

* What procedures are appropriate when a request for services from the field cannot be fulfilled by the unit receiving the request?

* What type of information dissemination is desirable to reach the widest audience?

Summary

The concept of outreach subscribed to by Gallaudet College is more encompassing than its more popularly referred to counterpart -- dissemination. Whichever the term, the basic issue is the timely transfer of people, products, information, and processes through an interactive set of procedures. In its barest form, outreach concerns itself with who provides what to whom in a disseminable channel that best fits the intended purpose of the interaction. How this is achieved in a resourceful and efficient manner is more art than science. Often, the nature of outreach strategies becomes conditioned by the characteristics of the activity being transferred, and the expectations of the target audience being served. Accordingly, outreach becomes an individualized effort functioning within a systems-oriented administrative structure. Without a coordinating structure, services could achieve much less than optimal results.

The position of the College with respect to its outreach mission is distinctly collaborative in nature. Both its formal and informal approaches are designed to achieve an appropriate level of autonomy and cohesiveness throughout the institution's manifold avenues of reaching out to its many publics and constituencies.

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